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Sheet Metal Working Machinery
Since 1986



TAAG MACHINERY CO.
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March 31, 2003

Re: Ellen van den Berg, Business Consultant

Introduction. I am the owner and President of TAAG Machinery Company, an importer of metal working machinery. TAAG is a small company of only eight employees with sales of approximately \$1.5M and growing.

The Problem. I am now fifty-five, flirting with a fuzzy vision of "retirement", and concerned about a "succession" or "turn-over" plan. The concern stems from the fact that I have built a business that is dependent on me being actively involved every day. I have realized that I can not hope to successfully turn over my business to my sons, employees or would be buyers as long as the business is dependent on me.

The Solution. About a year ago, I attended (by accident) a four-hour seminar, talking about "having your business work for you, rather than working in and for the business".

This seminar caught my interest and caused me to get hooked up with Ellen van den Berg, who has been my business "coach" for nearly a year. This has been an eventful "hook up".

I knew all along that although my business had great prospects and I had good employees, I needed help to enable my business to grow past my inabilities. I needed to somehow make my business more efficient and more autonomous, but how?

Over the past year, Ellen helped me to look at my business from the outside, in....view it like a mechanical asset that needs study and adjustment. She helped me to envision the business five and ten years from now, and convinced me the vision is possible to attain. She has made me realize that for the business to grow, I need to find a way to hand-off much of my routine duties to focus on strategic, growth objectives.

What is great about Ellen, is that she not only enables me to see the result, I want, she also shows me the process that will ensure the result. She also lets me tackle our more important "frustrations" first. No warm-up exercises of little meaning. From the beginning, we tackled real problems that yielded near immediate results.

Ellen has helped me to analyze my business in terms of major processes, to include my "production process", my "delivery process" and my "customer service process". We are successfully developing and implementing systems for each, that help to guarantee consistent, predictable performances in each process. With each process that is implemented my business is becoming more efficient and autonomous.

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With Ellen's guidance we refined what we believed to be an already effective marketing plan. We identified primary and secondary markets for our machines and how to access these markets more effectively. This analytical approach quickly yielded desirable results - our advertising dollars are being spent more effectively and our sales continue to increase.

Learning to "systemize" functions I "held close" has freed me to concentrate on strategic objectives that will grow my business. Ellen's matrix or thought process helped me to "script" tasks and functions that I thought only I could do. I was amazed to find that subordinates, using my "system" were actually performing the tasks better than I, as they were able to convert the system to "spread sheets"....thereby automating what was time consuming for me. Such experiences enabled me to systemize more of my important but routine tasks. Now I have more time to concentrate on larger issues and enjoy my business.

Ellen is also helping me in getting a deeper understanding of the financial aspect of my business and the importance of using regular financial reports as a management tool. I am sure that I will soon be able to "feel the pulse" of my business through meaningful reports from anywhere in the world.

Ellen will work you! But, she will work you at a pace that is realistic and in line with other demands on your time. She is easy to talk with and flexible.

I recommend Ellen van den Berg to any small business owner even those who have an MBA from Harvard, Stanford or USC. I think I am a good businessman, and know Ellen is helping me to be a better businessman. More importantly, what I am learning and applying under her coaching will allow for the transfer of an active, autonomous business, not dependent on me. I am not there yet, but I am making rapid progress with Ellen's help.

Don't hesitate to call if you have more specific questions.

Sincerely,



Tom Gharst
President/Owner